

HIS PARTNER  
By Victor Redcliffe

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For the first time in her life Nance Driscoll had met a man who came nearest to her cherished ideal of masculine perfection. Perhaps the tinge of oddness and romanticism in the meeting had cast a certain glamor over the circumstances. At all events, Nance was impressed and a pleasant smile would come across her face whenever she thought of Mervin Burritt.

"He is the nicest men I ever met," Nance told a friend, Morna Dyson. "I was out in the garden and rigged up a long pole with a big pickling fork on its end. The old pear tree was too high to climb and up in its top there was lots of fruit. I was picking off the pears with the fork when I happened to look toward the road. There, leaning on a fence and watching me with a half-smiling and half-thoughtful look on his face, was this gentleman."

"What was he like, Nance?" Morna asked.

"A vacationer on a jaunt, which he said was just what he was. He lifted his tourist cap politely and asked my pardon for staring at me, but I had given him an idea, he said."

"An idea?"

"Yes, about an invention. He said that the fork on the end of the pole had suggested quite an important point in a tree-trimming invention he was working over."

"I declare!"

"Then he got tell me how to care for the flowers and the bushes and the trees. It was pleasant to hear him talk. He seemed to know everything. Old Sorrel broke down the fence and went a-straying while we were talking and he went after him and got him back. I offered him some of the ripest pears and when he went away I felt as if it were some good friend who had left me."

"And haven't you seen him since?" questioned Morna.

"Well, yes," admitted Nance, with a slight flush. "This morning he came by as I was waiting at the gate for the postman. Mr. Burritt is stopping in the village for a few days. Father came out. You know he does not get around much and he likes to talk with people. Father sold the Midvale farm, you know, last week, and is thinking of investing the



Over Him Stood Two Men, Villainous-Looking Fellows.

money he got for it in some bonds. Well, Mr. Burritt knew all about good securities, for he is a city man. That interested father and he made Mr. Burritt stay for dinner."

"Why, Nance, you're getting a regular beau!" laughed Morna.

"The idea!" scouted Nance, but the flush on her face grew deeper. Then she covered her pretty confusion by declaring that she must hurry into the house and get supper, as